

# ACS Employee Newsletter

July 14, 2000

Volume 3, Issue 7

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## Worse County No More! By Ed Boks

Over the past ten to 15 years Maricopa County has often been accused of being the worse community in the United States when it comes to pet euthanasia. Interestingly, no one making this charge has ever been able to support their claim with data.

Well, **Merritt Clifton**, editor of **ANIMAL PEOPLE**, has taken the time to amass this data. Rather than looking at raw numbers, which can be deceiving, Mr. Clifton calculated the number of dogs and cats euthanized per one thousand humans living in a community. **ANIMAL PEOPLE** was able to obtain data from 108 North American cities, counties, and states.

As you study this data, you will immediately notice immense regional differences. The lowest ratios are clustered in the Northeast and the highest in the South, except around Washington D.C.

Mr. Clifton conjectures the low Northeastern and Washington D.C. area figures can be associated with a high urban population, apartment living and resultant low pet ownership. Cold winters also depress the survival rate of late-born feral kittens and suppress the estrus cycle in dogs and cats. This of course decreases the frequency of pets bearing litters. In addition, a relatively strong humane infrastructure that en-

courages neutering combined with animal control programs that are not mandated to pick up free-roaming cats helped lower the euthanasia rates in these communities.

The high Southern figures conversely reflect suburban populations, high pet ownership, warm winters, and a general lack of access to low-cost neutering.

Of most interest are jurisdictions whose euthanasia ratios are significantly below the regional norms. Besides the well-known example of San Francisco, which is euthanizing animals at a third the California state rate, Seattle, Austin, Houston, and Orlando stand out for euthanizing well below their respective state rates. The figures from the three latter cities reflect the success of determined local low-cost neutering projects, and demonstrate what such efforts can do.

The huge gap between the euthanasia ratios in Calgary and Montreal, whose pet ownership rates and weather are comparable, reflects the serious investment by the former in strong humane and animal control programs, compared with a long history of civic indifference in the latter.

"Notice the Maricopa County numbers (**which include the Arizona Humane Society numbers**) are just slightly

above the U.S. average. If you discount the snow belt states because of the distinct advantages they have over your region, Maricopa County is way below par, and is especially doing well when compared to Tucson" says Clifton. From the worst community in the country to middle of the pack in just a few short years. ACS is now dedicated to taking Maricopa County to the top of the list by 2005 or sooner!

Charts on page 7 reveal the very real progress ACS has made over the past decade. The euthanasia rate within ACS has dropped from 20 animals euthanized per 1000 humans in FY 1992 to 12.6 in FY 2000.

Although the adoption rate appears to be on a roller coaster it is important to know ACS adopted over **15,996** pets to loving homes in fiscal year 2000. **This is more adoptions than in any previous year in ACS history!**

The disturbing trend in Return To Owner numbers seems to continue. This is a national phenomenon. However, ACS has seen an upswing in RTOs this year. It is hoped ACS' implementation of a microchip program this coming year will continue to help reverse this trend.

Despite the fact that the impound rate has fallen com-

*(Continued on page 6)*

**"Another ACS Record Set: 15,996 Adoptions in Fiscal Year 2000! Two of those are mine, Mara and Copa! This is an all time record! You all should be very proud! Well Done ACS"**

*Dr. Jonathan Weisbuch*

# My First Weeks At ACS By Julie Bank

**ACS  
Featured  
In A Wonderful  
Arizona Republic  
Editorial  
Tuesday,  
July 11, 2000**

"That was a wonderful editorial in this morning's paper - 3 Thumbs Up!!"  
*Dorothy O'Connell  
Medical Examiner's Office*

*ACS' Response to Tina Singer's "Report" is available to the public.  
Call  
602-506-2772  
for information on obtaining a copy.*

**"Way to go ED!  
Thanks for  
defending us...  
your answers to this 'report' sure  
pumped me up; made me feel proud!!"**  
*Sandi Ball  
Dispatch Supervisor*

I have to admit I was nervous. Starting a new job, meeting new colleagues, having to spend time learning new systems and policies. I thought about it long and hard. Did I want to join the Maricopa County Animal Control Services team? Animal Control and welfare programs were very familiar to me but would I fit in here? Well, it's one month later and I can tell you that I am no longer worried. I am proud to be part of the Animal Control family and I look forward to getting to know all of you better.

Let me tell you a bit about myself. I grew up in Brooklyn, NY and have always been an animal lover. I knew that I wanted to work with animals but as a youngster I thought the only thing I could do was be a veterinarian. "So much school," I thought and the dream of helping animals was over.

It wasn't until I was an adult did I find animal welfare. Working as a volunteer at The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals (ASPCA), a national organization who also ran animal control for New York City, I learned that my dream of making a difference in the lives of animals and people can really come true.

I joined the ASPCA staff and for ten years I worked in different areas of the ASPCA. First in adoptions, then as the shelter manager, and finally as the Director of Education. I spent a lot of time traveling and helping other animal organizations in developing programs in their community. I loved my time at the ASPCA but knew it was time for me to return to a local community.

I moved to Arizona a year and a half ago. A great place to live (although the heat is driving me crazy.) I worked at the Arizona Humane Society as the Director of Education and Therapeutic programs where I developed education, animal behavior, public, and human animal bond programs. My time there was fun and educational but I am excited about the challenges that face me at

ACS.

You all have been wonderful to me and I appreciate that. I also appreciate all the energy and ideas that you have shared with me as I learn about the terrific jobs you all do. I see an incredible future for ACS.

As we develop the new Division of Public Programs I look forward to implementing many of your ideas and creating an environment where the public recognizes us as the professionals and leader in animal welfare in the community.

My office is located at the West Side Shelter. Please stop by and say "hi"! I look forward to working with and meeting all of you. And, thanks for making me feel welcome! ♦

## Field & Business Ops Make Great Team By E. Heydenreich

At the eastside recently we had a large black lab running in the Tempe Cascade Mobile Home Park. For those of you not familiar with the area it is about one mile south of the eastside shelter. This dog was injured but could run. We made several attempts to rescue the animal, including an attempt with a live trap, but all to no avail. However, the other day Officer **Dean Shinever**

and **Yvonne Alsdurf**, east business office associate, who happened to be riding along as part of her training regimen, were called to the mobile home park about the injured dog. Following Officer Shinever's instructions, **Yvonne** safely positioned herself in such a way as to prevent the dog from escaping over a fence. Yvonne, being the quick study she is, slowed the escape of the

dog, enabling Officer **Shinever** to safely capture the injured animal.

The concerned citizen who originally called us about this animal was kind enough to write in and express her appreciation for ACS' assistance in solving this problem. Thank You **Dean** and **Yvonne**! ♦

# All Hands Meeting Big Success...

On Sunday, June 25th, nearly 60 ACS employees gathered together for refreshments and to celebrate recent accomplishments. ACS has an All Hands Meeting every three months to provide employees with updates and important information on every facet of the organization. And this All Hands Meeting was no exception. Several incentive awards were distributed to employees throughout the meeting.

**Robert Murray, Debra Smith, and Gloria Moss**, each reported on the successful implementation of an *Employee Satisfaction Action Plan* in their respective Divisions. The Action Plans were developed by each Division to respond to the results of the *Employee Satisfaction Survey* conducted in December '99.

Ed Boks discussed the upcoming Strategic Planning session in July. Less than one year ago, ACS developed its first ever 5 Year Strategic Plan. The Plan received tremendous acclaim throughout the County. This year ACS will enhance and update the Plan to comply with the County's new Managing For Results methodology. As part of the discussion employees reviewed and discussed the ACS Mission, Vision and Values statements. Each Team was encouraged to continue to review these statements for relevance as ACS moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Employees are encouraged to obtain a copy of the Plan from their supervisors

and to study it so they can better participate in this year's Strategic Planning sessions. Supervisors and Managers will begin meeting with their Teams in early July to discuss each Team's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and trends. They will then bring employee input to the Strategic Planning sessions for incorporation in this year's Plan.

A significant milestone was recognized at the meeting. In 1996, ACS asked the **National Animal Control Association (NACA)** to conduct an assessment of ACS. The assessment resulted in a very thorough report containing 126 recommendations. Sadly, the NACA Report received little attention after it was submitted to ACS management. That is, until November of 1998 when Managers were charged with identifying and implementing all the recommendations that pertain to their Division. Robert, Deb and Gloria each reported that *every recommendation addressing a need in their Division has now been implemented!* The Managers gave a brief account of what this milestone means to their Divisions and to ACS as a whole.

The organizational structure was discussed and the new role of the Public Programs Division. All the

employees who came aboard since the last All Hands Meeting were introduced and welcomed, including **Julie Bank**, Director of Public Programs who very recently joined the ACS Team.

Many employees saw for the first time the artist rendering of the new **ACS Scratch & Sniff Petmobile**. ACS anticipated having the vehicle as early as September but it is now looking as though it may December before the vehicle arrives. Employees expressed approval and appreciation for the new vehicle with a round of applause.

**Cynthia Tomlinson** won two box seats to a Diamondback game for her willingness and ability to recite the ACS Mission Statement from memory. Cynthia was also recognized for the outstanding way she is managing the *J. T.P.A. Youth Summer Work Program*. Cynthia oversees this program in addition to her regular duties. ACS greatly appreciates her efforts.

All in All the All Hands Meeting was a wonderful opportunity to discuss what's happening in ACS! ♦



**John Baugh** who assisted her in the adoption process. She reports John was very informative and displayed a great deal of professionalism. She was impressed by his kindness and compassion with both the puppy and relating to her 8 year old son.

Maricopa County citizens are well served by ACS employees! ♦

## Way To Go ACS Employees!

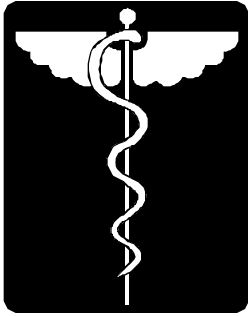
Someone very special left three cookie bouquets for the East side staff. One bouquet for the clinic, one for the kennels and another for the business office. No one seems to know who dropped off the bouquets.

Each bouquet came with a card that said: *"This is to thank you for all you do in getting all the cats and dogs returned home and in helping some of them find new homes. It does help and you all do make a*

*difference."*

Shelter Ops want to thank **Dean Shinever** for the way he so enthusiastically jumps in to help when help is needed. Dean has also been known to help bring animals to the clinic as well.

Diane Hazlett, a County employee working for Equipment Services, and her son visited the westside shelter looking for a puppy. She found one and made contact with



# Tularemia Alert

By Dan Schriek

Six monkeys (tamarans) at the Phoenix Zoo recently became ill and two died. The 2 dead monkeys tested positive for Tularemia.

Tularemia or rabbit fever is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium. It is most likely the disease was introduced to the zoo population by importation of an exotic animal that had eaten an infected rodent or bitten by an infected flea.

The disease can be transmitted to humans by direct contact with infected carcasses. To a lesser extent, it can also be spread by a bite from an infected flea or tick. The bite usually then becomes an ulcerous sore. Symptoms include fever, headache and swelling of the lymph glands near the exposure site. It requires antibiotic treatment and is rarely fatal.

This discovery led to a broad and cooperative in-

vestigation spearheaded by the Arizona Dept. of Health Services and assisted by Steve Kearning of the Division of Epidemiology in the Maricopa County Department of Public Health Services.

The investigation started by trapping and sero-testing 100 rodents from the area around the zoo. Specimens included various species of mice, rabbits, round-tailed ground squirrels, etc. This survey of the animal population most likely to be infected produced 4 positive cases of tularemia in 2 rabbits, 1 cotton rat and 1 round tailed ground squirrels. With these results, further testing was needed to determine risks to the public.

Zoo staff were clearly in the highest risk area and occupation. 16 zoo employees were given the blood test for Tularemia antibodies and

none tested positive.

The approach to minimize the risks to the public were multifaceted. The following events have occurred or will shortly be implemented:

- Signs are posted at the Phoenix Zoo advising visitors not to feed or pet any of the small wild rodents on the grounds. Pet animals (dog and cats) are not allowed per signs already in place.
- A similar posting has been made at the nearby Desert Botanical Gardens and Papago Park.
- Maricopa County Epidemiology Department will send a letter to local physicians advising them of the nature and transmission of the disease.
- A Public Service Announcement (PSA) detailing the nature of the disease and its

(Continued on page 8)



## Rabbit Fever Explained

**Tularemia** (or rabbit fever), infectious disease of wild rabbits, quail, opossums, deer, and other wild game animals. It was named for Tulare County, Calif., where it was discovered in 1910 by the United States Public Health Service. It is caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis* and has an incubation period of two to ten days. The disease is usually transmitted to humans through direct contact with an infected animal carcass. The bacteria enters the body through an open cut, which

becomes an ulcerous sore. It can also spread by a bite from an infected tick, flea, fly, or louse or by eating infected game animals. Symptoms are similar to those of influenza and include swollen and tender lymph glands in the armpits or groin, fever, headache, muscle pain, and weakness. Tularemia is diagnosed by a history of exposure to a wild rodent or carrier insects, the sudden onset of symptoms, and the presence of a skin lesion. Diagnosis is confirmed by a blood test for antibodies

against the bacteria. Patients are treated with antibiotics and warm saline dressings for skin lesions. Infection confers lifelong immunity. Physicians recommend the preventive measures of wearing rubber gloves for cleaning of game, liberal use of soap, water, and disinfectant, and thorough cooking.





# Volunteers and PETsMART Help ACS Save Lives

By Jonni Binenfeld

June was an exciting and busy month for our ACS volunteers! We had events at the *Pet Adoption Center*, the corporate **PETsMART** building, **Fry's**, and **El Portal in Fashion Square**.

I especially want to thank **Debbie White, Kathy Wal-drop, Julie Villanueva, and Bela Fidel** for giving a helping hand at our special events. They did a wonderful job!

If you would like to get in on the fun, we need volunteers for a mobile adoption event at Lund Cadillac on July 29-30. To volunteer for this event, call Barb Westermeyer at (602) 506-0101.

PETsMART responded to our call for help. As you know, every summer our shelters are inundated with cats. Julie Bank put out a call for help with the media, and when **PETsMART** heard we needed help to

save the lives of cats they came to the rescue. ACS is now adopting out cats and kittens in five **Luv-a-Pet** centers seven days a week.

*Over 135 cats were adopted* in the first couple weeks of our renewed partnership with **PETsMART's Luv-A-Pet** program. Let us know if you would like to volunteer to man one of these Centers. If you are interested in helping out please call me, the Volunteer Coordinator at (602) 506-8133.

The Luv-A-Pet locations are inside the following

**PETsMART Stores:**

**33<sup>rd</sup> Ave./Indian School**

**75<sup>th</sup> Ave./McDowell**

**Tatum/Shea**

**90<sup>th</sup> St./Shea**

**Power Rd./Hampton**

Thank you PETsMART for helping ACS save lives! ♦



Barb Westermeyer and Jonni Binenfeld work the ACS Booth



Jan Brewer & Ed Boks accept \$5,000 check from MilkBone & Fry's

## ACS Call Center Celebrates the 5th of July

While the nearly 3 million residents of Maricopa County were celebrating this country's birthday on Tuesday July 4th, the Call Center staff was bracing for the busiest day of the year. Commonly called "the day after" or Excedrin headache number 1, July 5<sup>th</sup> is non-stop phone calls from the opening bell.

Armed only with phones and computers, we placed sandbags at key locations and braced for the onslaught. At 6:59 AM (a call squeezed in before our official start time) the floodgates opened and we were deluged with calls until

6:05 PM (calls are answered after close if the caller was in the queue before closing). The numbers are impressive; 831 calls received in an 11 hour day or an average of 76 an hour. The busiest hour of the day was from 10:30 to 11:30 when we received 110 phone calls.

Even seasoned operators such as **Yvonne Peschard** and **Norma O'Neal** experienced scratchy throats due to the sheer volume of concerned citizens requesting assistance. Due to the combined efforts of the Call Center, Field staff and Dispatchers, many lost dogs

were reunited that day or shortly thereafter. We all slept very well that night knowing we had taken on a big challenge head-on and succeeded.

Shelter Operations was also hit hard by this annual event showing the highest number of impounds on a July 4th & 5th in three years. 165 dogs and 178 cats impounded for a total of 243 total impounds. Compared to 236 impounds in 1999 and 177 impounds in 1998. ♦



“Those who  
dance are  
considered  
insane  
by those who  
can’t hear the  
music.”  
*Bill Nastasiak*

**Congratulations  
to  
Ed Boks,  
Martha Bern,  
James Vanar,  
Julie Bank,  
Robert Murray,  
Debra Smith, and  
Gloria Moss  
for Graduating from  
Maricopa County’s  
prestigious  
Manager School  
June 23, 2000**

**FY 2000  
Annual Stats**  
Adoptions Up 12.6%  
RTOs Up 4%  
New Hope Up 34.1%  
Impounds Up 5.7%  
Adoptable Animals  
Euthanized  
Down 5.5%  
For Euthanasia Rate Read  
*Worse County No More!*

## ACS Rising to the Top...

(Continued from page 1)

pared to the increase in population ACS still impounded more animals in FY 2000 (61,163) than in any other year except 1992 (62,778).

Well done ACS staff!

<u>JURISDICTION</u>	<u>Per 1,000/Year</u>
Bozeman/Gallatin Cty (MT)	1.6 (1997)
Fairfax County (VA)	2.1 (1998)
Montgomery County (MD)	3.0 (1998)
San Francisco	3.9 (1999)
New Hampshire	5.2 (1997)
NEW YORK	5.4 mixed
Howard County (MD)	5.5 (1998)
CONNECTICUT	5.7 mixed
Calgary	5.8 (1998)
New York City	5.8 (1997)
Massachusetts	5.9 mixed
NEW JERSEY	6.0 (1996)
King County (WA)	6.0 (1997)
Salt Lake City	6.5 (1998)
Rhode Island	6.6 mixed
Orange County (CA)	6.7 (1998)
San Diego (city/county)	8.0 (1998)
VERMONT	8.0 mixed
Loudoun County (VA)	8.5 (1998)
Placer County (CA)	8.6 (1997)
Anne Arundel County (MD)	9.2 (1998)
Denver	9.4 (1996)
Chicago	9.8 (1997)
Alexandria (VA)	10.9 (1998)
Seattle	11.2 (1999)
Anchorage (AK)	11.6 (1999)
Prince George Cnty (MD)	11.7 (1998)
Hot Springs	11.9 (1994)
Milwaukee	11.9 (1996)
Columbus (OH)	11.9 (1997)
Portland/Multnomah Cnty	12.2 (1997)
<b>MARICOPA COUNTY ACS*</b>	<b>12.6 (2000)</b>
Prince William Cnty (VA)	13.7 (1998)
Santa Clara County (CA)	13.6 (1997)
Franklin County (OH)	13.6 (1997)
Chatham County (GA)	13.9 (1998)
Las Vegas metro area	13.9 (1999)
Stillwater (OK)	14.3 (1999)
WASHINGTON	14.3 (1994)
UTAH	14.4 (1996)
Los Angeles (city)	14.4 (1999)
Sacramento	15.1 (1998)
Eugene	15.2 (1997)
Carson City (NV)	15.5 (1999)
St. Louis metro area	15.6 (1999)
OREGON	15.8 (1997)
Pittsburgh (PA)	15.8 (1999)

Riverside (CA)	15.9 (1997)
DeKalb County (GA)	16.4 (1998)
MARYLAND	17.0 mixed
IOWA	17.1 mixed
Kansas City metro area	17.2 (1997)
Charlotte/Mecklenburg	17.5 (1999)
CALIFORNIA	18.0 (1997)
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	<b>18.1 (1997)</b>
COLORADO	18.6 mixed
OHIO	18.9 (1996)
VIRGINIA	19.2 (1998)
Philadelphia	19.7 (1997)
Kansas City (MO)	20.1 (1997)
Richmond (VA)	20.2 (1998)
Orlando	20.3 (1999)
<b>MARICOPA COUNTY et al **</b>	<b>20.3 (1999)</b>
Muskegon Cty. (MI)	21.1 (1998)
Denton (TX)	21.9 (1997)
INDIANA	22.2 mixed
Austin/San Marcos	22.5 (1997)
New Hanover County (NC)	22.6 (1998)
Richland County (OH)	23.1 (1999)
Baton Rouge	24.3 (1999)
Indianapolis	26.8 (1998)
Knox County (TN)	26.8 (1998)
Tulsa	27.2 (1994)
New Orleans/Jefferson	27.7 (1995)
Charleston (SC)	28.0 (1998)
Houston	28.2 (1995)
Shelby County (AL)	28.4 (1999)
El Paso (TX)	28.5 (1999)
Cincinnati & suburbs	28.9 (1997)
Rockingham County (NC)	29.0 (1994)
Ogden metro area	30.5 (1996)
Jefferson Parish (LA)	30.9 (1998)
Guilford County (NC)	31.3 (1997)
Dallas	31.1 (1997)
TEXAS	31.9 mixed
Fort Worth/Tarrant Cty	32.1 (1997)
Miami/Dade County	33.0 (1997)
Atlanta	34.7 (1998)
Wichita/Sedgewick Cty.	34.9 (1999)
Columbus/Muskogee (GA)	35.6 (1998)
Albuquerque	35.7 (1998)
Pueblo (CO)	35.7 (1999)
Pottawatomie Cty. (KS)	36.4 (1998)
Matanuska/Susitna (AK)	38.6 (1999)
Inland Empire (CA)	39.5 (1999)
Oklahoma City	39.8 (1998)
Lafayette Parish (LA)	40.7 (1999)
Tucson/Pima County	42.9 (1997)
Waynesboro (GA)	43.1 (1998)
Montreal	43.3 (1993)
FLORIDA	44.0 (1996)
Corpus Christi/Neuces	44.4 (1998)
Haywood County (NC)	45.4 (1999)

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

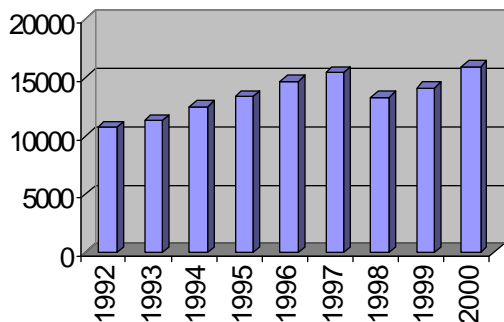
Davidson County (NC)	46.0 (1998)
San Antonio	46.8 (1998)
Fayetteville (AR)	49.8 (1998)
Augusta/Richmond Cty (GA)	56.9 (1999)
Mobile County (AL)	70.0 (1999)
Kershaw County (SC)	73.4 (1998)
Rutherford County (TN)	84.8 (1998)



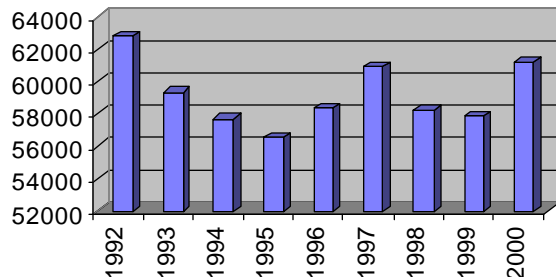
## Public Health Services Responds to ACS Approach to Measuring Results

**Dr. Weisbuch**, Chief Health Officer of Maricopa County Public Health Services was impressed with the “denominator” approach to measuring results described in the article above. “This is a very appropriate way to measure results in a growing community” he said. In fact, Dr. Weisbuch is recommending Public Health begin to use this method to measure some of their own performance indicators. ◆

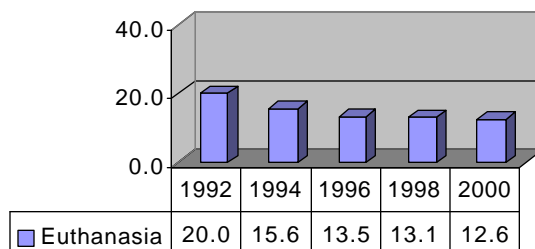
**Animals Adopted - FY92 - FY00**



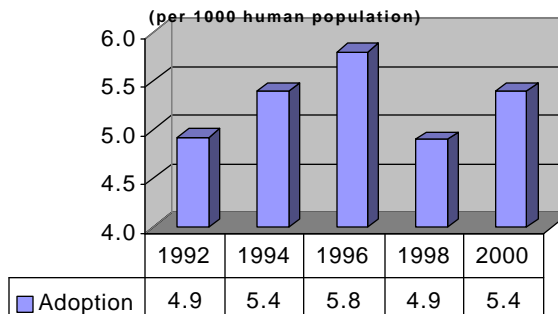
**Animals Impounded - FY92 - FY00**



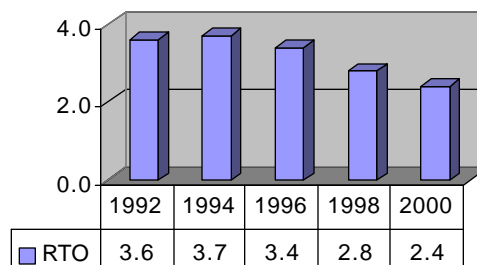
**ACS Euthanasia  
FY92 through FY00  
(per 1000 human population)**



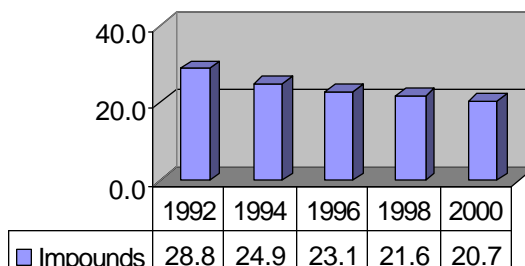
**ACS Adoptions  
FY92 through FY00  
(per 1000 human population)**



**ACS Returned to Owner  
FY92 through FY00  
(per 1000 human population)**



**ACS - Animals Impounded  
FY92 through FY00  
(per 1000 human population)**



# Maricopa County Animal Control Services

2323 South 35th Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85009



Animal Control  
Services



(*Tularemeia*  
Continued from page 4)

presence in the valley will  
be issued concurrently  
with the letter to local  
physicians.

Zoo staff are to be com-  
mended for their coopera-  
tion. In terms of danger to  
our staff, gloves should al-  
ways be worn when prepar-  
ing animals for rabies testing  
due to the possible presence  
of rabies virus and Tulare-  
mia bacterium. The liberal  
use of soap and water is al-  
ways recommended.

There is a very low chance  
of transmission through the

bite with an infected flea or  
tick. Any sore that does not  
heal should be brought to the  
attention of a physician. ♦



*Tularemia is Rabbit Fever*

## Do More...

Submitted by Karen Dickey

Do more than exist; *Live!*  
Do more than hear; *Listen!*  
Do more than agree; *Cooperate!*  
Do more than talk; *Communicate!*  
Do more than spend; *Invest!*  
Do more than think; *Create!*  
Do more than work; *Excel!*  
Do more than consider; *Commit!*  
Do more than forgive; *Forget!*  
Do more than help; *Serve!*  
Do more than see; *Perceive!*  
Do more than read; *Apply!*  
Do more than receive;  
*Reciprocate!*  
Do more than advise; *Help!*  
Do more than encourage; *Inspire!*  
Do more than change; *Improve!*  
Do more than reach; *Stretch!*  
Do more than grow; *Bloom!*  
And  
Do more than dream; *Do!* ♦

PETS911  
Phone Matrix  
is Now  
Bi-Lingual.

Have you checked  
it out yet?

Phone: 506-2772

Fax: 506-2739

Email: edboks@mail.maricopa.gov